

# Record of Meeting



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**Purpose of Meeting Combined Community Liaison Group Meeting No. 2**

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**Project** Wells Crossing To Iluka Road -  
Upgrading the Pacific Highway

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**Prepared By** Jo Moss **Phone No** 1800 557 673

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**Place of Meeting** Grafton Community Centre **Date** 9 November 2005  
59 Duke St, Grafton 6:30 – 9:30pm

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**Present**

**Grafton CLG**

Scott Flynn (SF)

David Foster (DF)

Des Harvey (DH)

James Lloyd (JL)

Dave Morrison (DM)

Bill Noonan (BN)

**Tucabia CLG**

Heidi Beynon (HB)

Roy Bowling (RB)

Sarah Dunlop (SD)

Ros Harradine (RH)

Robert Jefferies (RJ)

Kerry Lloyd (KL)

Megan McCulloch (MM)

Iven McLennan (IM)

Victor Pashkevich (VP)

David Pinnells (DP)

Mark Purcell (MP)

Ian Rees (IR)

Dorothy Scutt (DS)

Sharron Todd (ST)

Russell Widin (RW)

**Maclean CLG**

Allan Adamson (AM)

Pat Battersby (PB)

Lisa Brudenell (LB)

Peter Dibella (PD)

Brian Holland (BH)

Mark Kingsley (MK)

Harry Lang (HL)

Alex McCartney

Tony McGrath (TM)

Austin Sheehan (AS)

Chris Sparks (CS)

Bruce Walsh (BW)

**Observer**

Laurie Marchant

**Project Team**

Bob Higgins (RTA) (BH)

Mark Eastwood (RTA) (ME)

Diana Loges (RTA) (DL)

Jo Moss (SKM) (JM)

Evonne McCabe (EM)

Peter Prince (PP)

Paul Robilliard (SKM) (PR)

Richard Davies (SKM) (RD)



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<b>Apologies</b>	<b>Grafton CLG</b> Helen Busby (HBu)	<b>Maclean CLG</b> Don Day (DD)
	<b>Tucabia CLG</b> Bruce Bird (BB)	

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<b>Not Present</b>	<b>Grafton CLG</b> Col Milne Peter Morgan Henk Van der Merwe Tony Wade	<b>Maclean CLG</b> Rob Donges Robert Thompson
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<b>Distribution</b>	All of the above	
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The meeting commenced shortly after the nominated starting time of 6:30 pm.

### 1) Welcome and introductions

JM welcomed everyone to the meeting. She introduced the RTA's Project Development Manager, Diana Loges, Peter Prince, Project Director and Transport and Economics Team Leader (SKM) and Evonne McCabe, Community Liaison Manager (SKM). She then handed over to EM to facilitate the meeting.

EM advised that Ivars Katuzans has withdrawn from the CLG and that Allan Adamson has nominated as a member from the James Creek area. EM gave apologies (HBu, BB and DD).

EM went through the agenda and explained there would be three parts to the meeting – a session explaining the route options, break out into the 3 CLG groups to discuss issues specific to those communities and areas, and a combined question and answer session.

#### *Comments*

There is "one community" and all of the meeting should be conducted with one group.

There is benefit in discussion in smaller groups.

#### *Response*

JM - of the responses received to SKM's letter querying whether members preferred single or combined CLG meetings, most were in favour of a combined meeting and some preferred single meetings. The agenda for this meeting had been developed to satisfy both situations.

### 2) Notes of the last meeting

There were no comments on the notes of the last meeting.

### 3) Project update/overview

JM gave an overview of the project. The route options display is a key milestone in the project. The display commenced on 21 October 2005, for a period of 4 weeks. Posters are at



a number of locations in the study area and surrounding area. Staffed displays have been held over 4 days. A large number of individual meetings have been held with property owners.

The options are on display for community comment and submissions are to be sent by 18 November 2005.

#### 4) Presentation on route options

##### ■ **Key issues for options development – traffic and transport**

PP described the traffic conditions on the existing highway. One week of survey was undertaken in October 2004. Annual average daily traffic on the existing highway is approximately 7,500 – 8000 vehicles, comprising:

- 30% through traffic
- 20% is heavy vehicles
- 10% total heavies are very heavy
- 50% of total heavy vehicle traffic is local – i.e. traffic that has a trip stop or origin or destination in study area
- local trips comprise 70% of total traffic. Through traffic is a trip that does not stop. This comprised 30% of total traffic.

##### *Question*

Are the heavy vehicle volumes what would be expected?

##### *Response*

PP/JM - Yes, it is similar to the State average and for other sections of the Pacific Highway to the north and south.

Rail freight is important. Rail does not carry much freight, only about 9% of total freight. Majority travels on road.

##### *Question*

Government has put \$200 million into rail – why has this been ignored?

##### *Response*

PP – it is correct that Auslink has put into its forward commitment investment into the rail corridor in this area. However, that will not be enough to change situation. It might stop the decline in mode share for road, but will not reverse it. Need much more significant investment. Study has considered rail. Road transport is growing much faster than rail transport.

##### *Question*

What is the rail travel time between Brisbane and Sydney?



*Response*

PP - Rail travel will not come close to the travel time by road, which is now about 11 hours.

■ ***Development of long list of options***

PR outlined the steps in route options development that have been discussed in previous CLG meetings. The process is reported in the Route Options Development Report which is on public display.

Using maps produced during the meeting by the computerised geographic information system (GIS), PR and RD described the key constraints in the study area that were considered and described each of the options in terms of its characteristics and potential impacts. This presentation included the sections of the study area from Wells Crossing to the Clarence River and the section between the Clarence River and Iluka Road.

***It is noted that the presentation and maps are not recorded in these notes. This information is in the Route Options Development Report.***

*Question*

Would it be possible to have a route that uses Purple, the Shark Creek connection and then the Orange/Purple route to the Clarence River?

*Response*

RD - Yes. There are 17 possible options combining part of the four main options and including the two connections.

*Question*

Why was the study area made larger, then smaller with the options?

*Response*

PR - The process started with a broad or strategic study area. This was reviewed and refined to enable the consideration of options outside the study area, and this resulted in a slight increase in the study area a little further to the east to provide greater flexibility in the identification of options.

*Question*

What about the social impacts with purple and green?

*Response*

PR – there are obviously direct and indirect impacts on people and properties.

*Question*

It is hard to understand the social impacts when orange is considered. There is a difference between people who are being affected now and those who will be newly affected. The figures are misleading. Will SKM distinguish the new effects of the different options from the current effects of the existing highway?



*Response*

PR – one of the key social impacts is from noise. The Department of Environment and Conservation guidelines require identification of receptors where the criteria are exceeded, regardless of whether they are affected now, or not. Different criteria apply whether the road is a new road or a redevelopment, and these have been applied as appropriate to the route options.

*Question*

Are similar criteria applied to visual impacts?

*Response*

PR - Visual impacts have been considered.

*Question*

Why was the study area expanded to be outside Pine Brush State Forest?

*Response*

PR - Decision was made taking a number of factors into account. The extension provided opportunity to develop options that minimised impacts on the Pine Brush State Forest. However, there is still an option through the forest.

*Question*

The Minister's announcement indicated that the study area was expanded to avoid impacts on the State Forest. The RTA has been manipulative and divisive – this has been done to crush public opinion about taking an option through the forest. What are the legislative requirements?

*Response*

ME – there are lots of constraints that have been considered.

PR – the zoning in the State Forest would need to be altered through an Act of Parliament if more than 20 ha is affected in zones 1, 2 and/or 3a. State Forests were assigned constraints based on Forest Management Zoning supplied by NSW Forests.

*Question*

Will the matters presented at the hydrology focus group be presented to the CLGs?

*Response*

JM – the notes of the meeting will be placed on the project web page.

*Question*

Are there criteria that govern the edge effects of the road, e.g. noise and air? People don't see what these effects are and they are not limited to the front of houses. Is there a footprint?



### *Response*

PR – noise and air modelling has been undertaken. The predicted impacts are based on a notional centreline. At this stage of the study the impacts are reported in terms of the corridor. Footprint not shown as impacts could change. The footprint of the road corridor will generally be 100m. Noise impacts could extend beyond that.

## **5) & 6) Discussion / community views and feedback on options**

The meeting adjourned into the three CLG groups to discuss the options and to identify key issues for the communities in those areas. Each group nominated a person to report back on these issues to the combined group. The groups reported back as follows:

### ***Grafton CLG***

- Orange option
  - least ecological impact
  - may be cheaper in the long run
  - economic benefits
  - problems with flooding, including rotting vegetation - can cause fish kills
- Each of the options have problems - need to balance social, ecological, economic issues
- Construction materials - where would these come from? What are the environmental impacts from importing fill?
- Grafton is 4 hours from Brisbane - options B-D would remove a lot of trucks from stopping
- Impact on Yaegl Nature Reserve
- Southern section has only two route options, not four
- Responsibility for existing asset - long term maintenance
- Impacts on local routes
- Impacts on land use patterns
- Commercial / development along route
- Minimise impacts on individuals
- Option A affects the most number of people and agricultural land - high visual impact
- No objection to more use of state forests
- Impacts on businesses
  - Access – harvesting equipment / timber / cattle
- Options C and D have less impacts on people and agricultural land
- Orange A is an established primary transport route
- Eastern options will impact on lifestyle
- Grafton is the hub of Pacific Highway / Gwydir Highway / Summerland Way / Armidale Road - nexus of these will be broken
- Concerned about loss of houses. Unacceptable in current form
  - Number and location of access points / interchanges – access to the airport

### ***Maclean CLG***

- Improved road safety for all traffic – 3 of the options presented do not satisfy the RTA's own criteria
- High impact on our community (east or west)



- Lack of detail in the Route Options Development Report
- Time constraint for responses to the Route Options Development Report
  - noise
  - cost breakdown and whole of life costs
  - economical impact
  - hydrology and flooding
  - ecology (desktop base not up to date & latest environmental study not in the report)
  - community feedback received.
- Value Management Workshop
  - not enough representation from the affected communities
- Impact on people from noise
  - existing noise
  - new noise
- Report is based on an out of date CVC settlement strategy (1998)
- Economic impact on Maclean and Grafton
  - no study in the report
- Loss of prime agricultural land
  - severance, access and hydrology
- Construction of service roads for access
  - severance and access
- Existing highway
  - cost and maintenance
- Community feedback via CLG has not been considered e.g. Class A road to Shark Creek
- Find solution to minimise impact on Townsend residents
- Impact on property values
  - adequacy of compensation for those affected

#### ***Tucabia CLG***

- Noise affectation – report gives no detail; noise will echo through valley
- Definition of criteria – shoddy
- Report is flawed
- Air pollution – no detail
- Affects organic farmers
- Report doesn't show where the houses or clusters of houses are
- Visual impacts
- Impact on whole atmosphere / rural integrity
- How can we compare options without data?
- Effects of hydrology – where will the water go?
- Effects on drinking water
- Fauna and flora – no analysis – report doesn't list endangered species. Figures only show high value blobs
- Safety – no figures; 50% improvement for orange – not indicated for options B, C, D
- Travel times for the options are misleading



- How many will use the road?
- Grafton will be affected - no economic impact analysis in report. Bypasses do affect towns economically
- Orange / A will benefit commuters
- Fair compensation
- Viable agricultural land – not acknowledged in Pillar Valley / Tucabia
- Impacts on the sugar industry
- Impacts on stock routes eg Ulmarra to Pillar Valley
- Economic effects farmers versus towns
- Social Impacts in report are flawed
- Impacts on health – visual, air pollution and noise

The following additional comments were made during the report back on the options by CLG members:

- Despite the high construction cost of orange, it will attract 90% of traffic and will be cheaper in the long run by a long way. Orange provides value for money.
- The majority of traffic will benefit from orange. Need to recognise the number of people who commute to Grafton from the northern beaches of Coffs Harbour and also Yamba. Many of these are school teachers who car pool. There is a significant benefit to daily commuters with orange in terms of time savings and safety benefits.
- No-one is happy about the lack of detailed data in the Route Options Development Report. The conclusions are there, sort of. Compare the report for this project with other projects, e.g. Tintenbar to Ewingsdale which contains the full details on everything that has been looked at.
- Detail is not there to make sensible decisions.
- Back up data is not there / not available. Where is the data that says where fauna / habitat corridors are? How can the community comment if they don't know where they are? Team should have done the research.
- DL comment - The group is making sensible comment and making sensible decisions about what is in the report. A great deal of substance has been gained by the community. The report adds to an existing body of work. ME commented that he supported this comment. This is a very big study area and investigations are ongoing. There is sufficient information to be able to make a rational comparison of corridors. There will need to be more investigation as the study progresses.
- One of the CLG members posed a question to all CLG members: How many CLG members are satisfied with the information in the Route Options Development Report? One person indicated 'yes'. The question was then asked: How many CLG members are dissatisfied with the information in the Route Options Development Report? Over three-quarters indicated they were dissatisfied.

*Question*

Please clarify the roles of the RTA team members.

*Response*

ME - Diana Loges is the Project Development Manager and Mark Eastwood is the Senior Project Development Manager.





*Question*

Is there enough in the report to determine impacts?

*Response*

DL – yes.

*Question*

How much influence will the submissions have on the value management workshop (VMW)?

*Response*

EM - the submissions report will be presented to the VMW.

DL – the submissions report is one part of what is considered in the selection of a preferred route.

*Question*

Why is it necessary to hold the VMW in just a few weeks time?

*Response*

ME – need to progress the study. The community has already commented on the uncertainty that is out there and need to provide some certainty as soon as possible.

*Question*

Why do the options go through the centre of properties rather than being on the boundaries? Is Glenugie State Forest such a constraint that options can't go through it?

*Response*

EM - one of the reasons to go on public display is to get local information. When the preferred route is selected it may be necessary to make adjustments and one reason for doing so would be to take details of individual property impacts.

*Question*

Could blue be reinstated?

*Response*

We have done a lot of analysis to get to the short list of options which are feasible and offer the best opportunity for selecting a route that meets the project objectives. However, until a decision is made, nothing can be absolutely ruled out.

*Question*

Is it possible that the new route could be located outside the corridors shown?



*Response*

DL - while it is our preference to work within the 250m alignment, it is still possible that we would look at other options.

*Question*

Not convinced that the community is listened to. What is the weighted average attributed to the community view?

*Response*

EM - Not a vote. Team is looking to see what the issues are and the trends.

ME - VMW uses a structured approach.

*Question*

Will community feedback be presented at the VMW?

*Response*

BH – all comments in submissions will be considered. The submissions report will identify the issues and provide a response to them. The submissions report will be made public.

*Question*

Why isn't the detail in the Route Options Development Report?

*Response*

EM - The data is in a series of working papers.

*Comment*

There is no section on community feedback in the report.

*Question*

When will the decision be made?

*Response*

ME – a decision on the preferred route should be known by mid 2006.

*Comment*

It was originally anticipated that the preferred route would be known by the end of 2005 and the concept plan by mid 2006.

*Response*

BH – these were the original targets but projects do suffer slippages.



*Question*

Will the concept design be completed in mid 2006? Would not have thought it was possible to have the preferred route 7 months from now. Need to remove the uncertainty for people in the Clarence River.

*Response*

BH – aiming for preferred route and concept by mid 2006 so there is certainty for property owners and land owners.

*Question*

At the start of the project it was anticipated that the project would be assessed under the provisions of Part 5 of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act*. What impact will the Part 3A provisions have on the environmental assessment for the project?

*Response*

JM - The changes to the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act* would be a good topic to discuss at the next CLG and will be put on the agenda. In the interim the RTA has prepared a Fact Sheet on Part 3A approvals and all CLG members are encouraged to take one of those (fact sheets were available at the meeting).

*Question*

How long after VMW will the preferred route be selected?

*Response*

BH - depends on the outcome of the VMW and whether additional issues arise. Could flow smoothly – no issues. Have been projects where further investigation has been required.

DL – commented that team is continuing to talk to people, not only potentially affected property owners. RTA is proposing to hold the VMW in December. The VMW does not decide a preferred route.

ME – as a result of the VMW there may be more work to do.

DL – the outcome could be a combination of options and may need more investigations to clarify things.

*Question*

When would an EIS start?

*Response*

BH - need to refer to the RTA's Fact Sheet on approvals under Part 3A.



*Question*

There are 14 distinct communities in the study area. Why are there only 6 community participants on the VMW? Why did the community representatives have to be selected before the options were known? What if the Tucabia CLG wants to change its representatives?

*Response*

ME - There are usually no more than 4 community participants on the VMW and the number for this project has been increased to recognise the study area size. There are 4 nominated participants from Council and they will also represent the community. The community participants at the workshop provide an understanding of general views.

**7) Next CLG meeting**

Date not set at this stage. Likely to be held after the Value Management Workshop.

*Note*

In accordance with the process established for the CLGs, draft notes were sent to the nominated CLG members to check. It is noted that there was a long time delay in sending the notes to these CLG members after the meeting and some members felt they were unable to check them properly.

The project team has adopted the goal of sending the draft notes to the nominated CLG members within two weeks of the meeting.